

# The End of Thorns

Volume III, Number 4

September/October, 1990

*Letter*

## Lord teach us to pray

Dear Folks,

This is an exciting time for us as a church. It seems that the God of contradictions is at work among us. On the one hand, we are being called to repentance, prayer, and seeking the Lord so that He would send the rain.

On the other hand, we are having one of the best times of outreach to the campus we have had in four or five years. It is difficult for me to say what the direction of the church is now. On one hand, God seems to be withholding, while on the other hand, He seems to be sending His blessing.

But we are learning to live with seeming contradictions. The all wise God is able to take seeming contradictions and make one truth out of them.

I have a suspicion that the joy of the outreach is just firstfruits of what God wants to give us after He has made us a people of prayer.

We should join in with the petitions of the disciples, "Lord teach us to pray."

After ten years as a church, the lesson has come through loud and clear, "The times of greatest fruitfulness, follow the times of sincere petition and seeking of God."

We have learned that, "We will never do on our feet, what we have not already done on our knees."

But more than learning to pray, we must learn to "continue" in prayer. Being a product of our society, we know how to put out the effort to respond to the need of the moment, but we do not have the discipline to "go down deep in the foundation of prayer" to support a greater move of God's Spirit.

God has been gracious in condescending to our place in prayer. But He is calling us now, to come up to His house, which is called, "a house of prayer." He wants us to live with Him and therefore live in prayer.

If we want to be the people of God, we must become a people of prayer. If we become a people of prayer then we will be the people of God.

When God moves on us as a body, I believe people will make every effort to join in times of corporate prayer to build a place for the presence of God. When the cares of this world become so sickening to us that we need something else, I know where we will run...

...To Him,

Billy

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#### *Pastor's Brief*

*This newsletter is produced by Billy Henderson, Claude Hammond and Robert Hartley for members and friends of LCF. It is intended to clarify the vision of this church, as well as encourage and instruct.*

## Pray for others as you would have them pray for you

We have a desire and, I believe, call to reach out to students at the University of Kentucky. As we do that, we must see ourselves as part of the greater church that God is forming.

Specifically, at UK, there are two other local churches which were birthed similar to us. Covenant Church began a few years before us as an outreach to youth, while Cornerstone (formerly Maranatha) began a couple years after us..

Both of these have run a course similar to us. After becoming established as a church, outreach to the University became less effective.

But in their hearts, like us, they still have a desire to reach the mission field of students. Covenant is attempting to start a new outreach to campus, called Vanguard. Glenn Duneheew, Patti Stanton, and Joe Howard are still working on campus as an outreach of Cornerstone.

There are many other local churches that have a special call to reach college students. Scott Williams oversees the ministry to college students at the church in Columbia. The Fellowship of Christians in Russellville, AK, maintains a strong outreach to Arkansas Tech.

Soon, our folks will be fellowshiping with Covenant Life Fellowship, from Kirksville, MO. where they have an outreach to the campus based in their local assembly.

Please pray that we as a local church will be effective in reaching students.

Just as important, we need to pray for these other pastors and churches that God would give them wisdom to enable their people to touch the world through touching the colleges in their towns.

## UCF UNIVERSITY CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

### Reaching campus

by Claude Hammond

University Christian Fellowship is an outreach by members of our church who are dedicated to making radical Christians out of students on the University of Kentucky campus. Jimmy Leitsch, who heads up UCF, says that this year's efforts have been bearing fruit.

"It seems the Lord has really caused us to meet a lot of freshmen," Jimmy said. "They're probably not hardened yet, like older college students are. Most of those who stop by our booth on campus are freshmen, while others who have been around for awhile will just walk by.

There are some differences between the way UCF is reaching students this year and the way they attempted to reach students last year. Last year, UCF members held Bible studies in the dormitories at UK. "It's tough to communicate in a small dorm room Bible study what the move of God is all about," Jimmy said. "What's different this year is our weekly Wednesday night fellowship meeting, and it works. There's a more definite impartation of what God is doing. It's more exciting, more challenging. A few members are still holding Bible studies in the dormitories, but the Wednesday night meeting is our main focus."

An average of about 30 people a week are attending the Wednesday night meetings, as many as half of them are UK students with the rest being Lexington Christian Fellowship members. Already, there are some students who are coming regularly, even though UK's Fall Semester is not yet a month old.

It's important that families get the UCF college students involved in their lives. Inviting them over for dinner is a good starting point. Giving the students a "home away from home" can be a valuable ministry. "The church has been doing a good job," Jimmy said. "Our families have been great about asking people over. It's important for families to call these people, to jump in and relate."

There's still a lot of work to be done. "We still have to tie up some loose strings. Those loose strings are people that have come once to our meetings, and we haven't heard from them since. God has been doing something in their lives over the last three weeks, and we need to share with them. We haven't connected with everybody yet. We're still following up, and visiting them at their dorm rooms."

There's a certain mindset and commitment that is needed for those committing themselves to working with UCF. "I'm looking for a team, a band of people that will really give themselves to the people on campus," Jimmy said. "They need to be making the students a part of their day-to-day lives, and to hang out with them, and really be their friends. They should do more than just attending meetings and calling a few people on the phone for follow-up." ■

# Family mission is the will of God

From the September/October issue of People of Destiny magazine.

by Larry Tomczak

We must constantly guard against making "healthy family life" the focal point of our lives. Mission, not maintenance, is the will of God. Cozy Christianity has no place in a weeping world. Church is not simply "an important part of our family life," but rather, in Christ it is our life! We don't want to raise solid, healthy children just to admire them as we age. We're raising them up to play their part in God's plan to see the Church restored and the nations reached.

A father of five in California challenged me with this remark a year ago: "Larry, our goal is not just 'focus on the family,' but rather 'family with a focus!'" The Christian family is not an end in itself. In fact, Jesus taught that if we try to "save our lives" we'll only end up "losing them." But if our children see us totally wrapped up in the Lord, his Church, and his mission to reach a needy world, they'll most likely abandon themselves to do the same.

Here are ten suggested ways to keep our families focused and radical rather than ingrown and comfortable:

1. Get children involved early in local church life; helping at the tape table, serving in children's ministry, volunteering at a local soup kitchen, babysitting, etc.
2. Whet your older children's appetite for evangelism by getting them involved in short-term evangelistic outreaches. If at all possible, go with them! Let them underwrite some of the expense through money-raising projects. Two of my children are saving for evangelistic trips to Mexico City and the Philippines by selling Christmas tree bags, cutting lawns, selling handmade items, and investing some of their allowances.
3. Read good books or watch selected videos that instill mission and vision. Appointment in Jerusalem and Bruchko, televised Billy Graham crusades, and videos from the local Christian bookstore are all tremendous tools, especially when followed by discussion.
4. Plan overnight outings with other parents and friends, centering on both fun and fellowship which expands vision. For the past six years, several fathers and I have gathered regularly with our sons for what we call a "Boys' Night" educational overnighter. With sleeping bags and snacks, we've done things like watch "The Hiding Place," observe conditions in a jail, visit nearby Gettysburg, and attend an auto show, using it as a springboard to discuss materialism in our world.
5. Extend hospitality to other Christians who can share a meal with the family as well as a testimony that will reinforce the values and principles you are teaching.
6. Pray together as a family for Christians sent forth on church-planting teams. Taping up a picture of the team and helping your children learn about the locality where the church is being planted will help broaden your family's perspective for practical involvement in our world. Every morning at breakfast, I lead our family in prayer for the two cross-cultural church-planting ventures that we in People of Destiny are advancing.
7. Write letters to "pen pals" in other churches and in other lands. Children learn more than effective writing skills when they reach out this way.
8. Help your children gain a world perspective by clipping out news articles and watching news broadcasts and documentaries that instill in them a sense of the "big picture." Make use of maps, almanacs and encyclopedias to look up pertinent places and people.
9. Cultivate a mentality in your children that they are called with you to be world-changers able to affect their generation. Likewise, cultivate their boldness and godly self-confidence by encouraging them to develop their communications skills, whether through passing out tracts, participating in acting classes and plays, or witnessing to friends (both yours and theirs)!
10. As a family, financially support proven apostolic teams and church-based outreach ministries. Rather than treating your pledge like just another bill, make it a "family affair" in which you share with your children the joy of affecting nations for our Lord Jesus Christ. ■

Watch for ideas in the next PB on how you can apply these principles through LCF.

# The beginning and end of thorns

*“And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it. And that which fell among the thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.” Luke 8:7, 14*

I had gotten a late lead on a piece of property the church might be interested in. Rick Stames drove me to the realtors office in his “hunch backed” blue pick up. The realtor gave us a plot map and we had just enough time to drive out and see it before the training team meeting.

We arrived at the several acres which we were told bordered the Kentucky River. The man who was part owner lived in the dilapidated house on the property and gave us permission to walk down to the river. He pointed us in the right direction and we headed off.

The path ended at a garbage dump and we headed cross field. We forged our way through a field that had once been a strawberry patch, as evidenced by old plants still hanging on.

The sultry Kentucky midsummer weather was beginning to cause our bodies to produce a film of sweat which made the various seeds stick to our bodies. The shade ahead as the field gave way to woods was inviting. We knew the last half of the trip to the river would be much more comfortable.

We didn't count on the strip of briars between us and the shade. If we had, Rick wouldn't have worn shorts and I wouldn't have worn my French Shriners.

By the time we got through the briars, our desire to reach the river was gone, we were already late for the meeting, and we were sure this land wasn't for us.

I still couldn't tell you if it bordered the river.

## Thorny examples

I hold Adam and Eve personally responsible for that bad experience. If it hadn't been for the fall, there wouldn't have been *thorns*. Genesis tells us that God added them to the roses as part of the curse.

Of course God had a purpose in *thorns*. He used them for illustrated sermons for years. After facing the thorns in the wilderness for many years the children were well aware of how they could slow down and demoralize you.

God drew on these mental images that they had

developed to describe to them what could happen spiritually to them as they entered the land if they were not careful.

“But if ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you; then it shall come to pass, that those which ye let remain of them shall be pricks in your eyes, and *thorns* in your sides, and shall vex you in the land wherein ye dwell.” Exodus 33:55

After they got in the land, they didn't run everybody out and God gave them another warning, “Know for a certainty that the Lord your God will no more drive out any of these nations from before you; but they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides, and *thorns* in your eyes, until ye perish from off this good land which the Lord your God hath given you.” (Joshua 23:13)

Later on, after Joshua had died, they did what he had told them not to do. God reminded them, “Wherefore I also said, I will not drive them out from before you; but they shall be as *thorns* in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare unto you.” Judges 2:3

God was telling them all along, “Remember when you tried to get to the river and the thorns pricked you and slowed you down and eventually discouraged you? Well, these people in the land have foreign gods and will slow you down until they stop you, unless you clear the land of these “*thorns*.”

## New Testament thorns

In the New Testament we see certain people described as those who are *thorny* ground. Once again, this is not natural thorns but spiritual. The thorns are the cares of this world, the riches of the world, and the lustful pleasures of this world.

Of the three categories of *thorns* mentioned, the most difficult to deal with is the cares of this world. Cares are the things that in right context are good to have. We care for our families, we care for our jobs, and we care for the things God gave us.

But the problem is that these “good” things can rise up and become the focus of our lives. As soon as they

do that, they become *thorns* that cling to our clothes, scratch our legs, and impede us from moving ahead.

Paul said, "He that hath a wife careth for the things of this world how he may please his wife." In Ephesians, husbands are told to lay their lives down for their wives. Is this a contradiction? No.

It shows the divine tension between proper care of what God has called us to and letting those cares overcome us.

It is so easy for me to get my mind tuned in on

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***The problem is that these "good" things rise up and become the focus of our lives...they become thorns that...keep us from moving ahead.***

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looking for a new house or car and let that become the center of my focus. And, the more stuff I get, the nearer I come to letting my stuff get me. As a matter of fact, another way to spell *thorns* would be S-T-U-F-F.

Jesus said that it was easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than it was for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. As Americans, we are rich. The problem with riches is that they so easily become *thorns*.

## Getting rid of thorns

So what are we to do when we find ourselves caught in the *thorn* patch? That is, what do we do when the "stuff" of this life has overcome us?

First, you do not try to plant more seed. You need to get rid of the *thorns*! "For thus saith the Lord to the men of Judah and Jerusalem, Break up your fallow ground, and sow not among *thorns*." (Jeremiah 4:3) Fallow ground had been plowed at one time, but left dormant until thorns had sprouted. In the natural to break it up meant to use a plow and turn the *thorns* under.

The next verse goes on to give us the spiritual significance, "Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, and take away the foreskins of your heart, ye men of Judah..."

The key then is to plow under the fleshly nature that has been attaching itself to the cares and making them little gods in our lives.

Isaiah says, "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts;

and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him...For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it...Instead of the *thorn* shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the *brier* shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the Lord for a name..." (Isaiah 55:6-13)

In addition to plowing under, Isaiah says to seek the Lord. This causes the seed to take root, and in the place of *thorns* and *briers* we have fur and myrtle trees.

As we seek the Lord, the cares of this world take proper perspective and the fruit of His Kingdom flows through us.

Finally, the *thorns* of the curse were dealt with in Jesus. "And the soldiers platted a crown of *thorns*, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe...Then came Jesus forth wearing the crown of *thorns*, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man!" John 19:2, 5

Natural *thorns* came as a result of the curse. Their spiritual significance is attested to throughout the Bible. They signify the gods of this world that hook into our attention and draw our minds away from God.

When Jesus died on the cross, it dealt with all sin

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***The more stuff I get, the nearer I come to letting my stuff get me.***

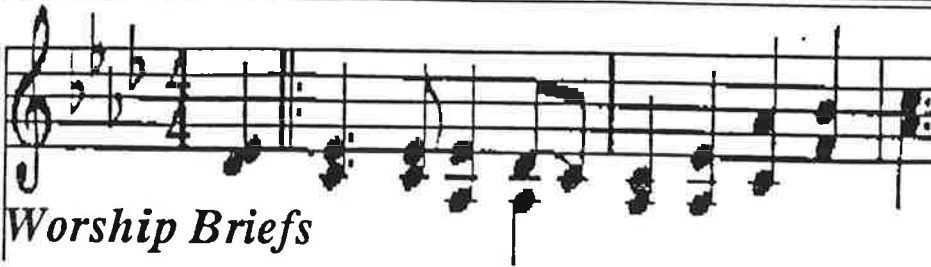
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and the curse of the law. The crown of *thorns* reminds us that He bore our *thorns*. He dealt with those things in life that would impede our approach to the Father.

The crown of *thorns* tells us that we can have the mind of Christ, and tear down every high thing that exalts itself against God.

If you find yourself lukewarm and entangled with the cares of this life, plow those things up, seek the Lord, and put your faith in the finished work of the cross.

Then, as it says in Isaiah 55:12 "...ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands." Also, you shall, "[spring] up and bear fruit an hundredfold." Luke 8:8 ■



## Worship Briefs

# Bless me or bless you, Lord?

Some questions that I often have concerning our corporate worship time on Sundays are, "why have we come together here tonight?" What is in our hearts when we come to worship the Lord?

The foremost reason for worship is to minister to the Lord. We do not come with a heart of BLESS ME LORD, but rather, I WILL BLESS THE LORD. Most of us realize this is true and yet we must admit there are times when we come away from a worship service and complain because the worship didn't bless us or do as much for us as it did the previous week. May be some of these other thoughts will sound familiar: Worship seemed dead this week, or The worship team just wasn't together this time, or Worship would be better if we would sing something besides Hosanna every week, etc. We tend to rate how good the worship service was according to how much we came away with after the experience, or how much it blessed us.

The question is not whether the worship service blessed me, but whether it blessed God. Did He approve? Was He pleased with our "sacrifice of praise"? It's true that when we truly bless the Lord, He blesses us in return, but our primary motivation has got to be to minister to Jesus.

Many times we come ready to BE BLESSED rather than TO BLESS. Sometimes we're so wrapped up in ourselves that we come with nothing to minister. Sometimes guilt or condemnation, or hurts that we have keep us in a state of HELP ME JESUS instead of I LOVE YOU LORD. We should understand that worship is not a time for getting into ourselves through introspection but of getting into God, knowing that He is our life, our hope, our God.

In Luke, chapter 7, there's a wonderful illustration of a woman ministering to and worshiping Jesus. Jesus was dining at the home of Simon the Pharisee along with other men from the city. A woman "who was a sinner" came and stood behind Jesus, weeping. She knelt and began to wet His feet with her tears and wipe them with her hair and kissed His feet anointing them with perfume. Simon was thinking, "If Jesus knew what kind of person she was He would not even let her touch Him." Jesus pointed out that Simon had offered Him no water for His dusty feet, nor did he give Him a kiss, nor did he anoint His head with oil; but this woman had totally given of herself to minister to Jesus.

This was a woman who needed the love and forgiveness of Jesus. She did not, however, come to Him saying bless me; She came, instead, to serve and bless the Lord. She in return was blessed and went away forgiven of her sins.

Jesus commands us to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. If this is our life, to love God, then there is no reason that every time we come together can't be a wonderful time of ministry to Jesus.

Remember, we are covered by the blood of Jesus. We're His people. So let's draw near to God with full assurance and Bless the Lord. ■

## List of prayer

I have always enjoyed this list of words translated as "prayer" in the KJV Old Testament. It gives a broader perspective on this activity we call prayer.

1. Na--a primitive participle of incitement and entreaty.

2. Palal--a primitive root, to judge (officially or mentally); by extension, to intercede, pray, entreat, judge, make supplication.

3. Luw--a wish, I would, would God that.

4. Anna--from a contraction from the words love and pray, I beseech thee.

5. Chanan--to favor, bestow, to implore.

6. Tsela--the sense of bowing, prayer.

7. Paga--by importunity, come (betwixt), cause to entreat, fall upon, make intercession, entreat.

8. Athar--to burn incense in worship.

9. Siyach--to ponder, to converse with oneself and hence aloud, utter, commune, complain, declare, meditate, muse, pray, speak, talk with.

10. Shael--to inquire, to request, demand, ask counsel on, beg, borrow, lay to charge, consult, desire.

11. Chalah--to be rubbed or worn, hence to be weak, sick, afflicted, be grieved, be sorry, woman in travail, be weak, be wounded.

12. Tephillah--a hymn, a prayer.

13. Lachash--a whisper, a private prayer.



**Body briefs**

**Prayer needs, meetings, and other announcements**

**Pray for**

Continue praying and, if possible, fasting for Gregg Greer. The surgeon will be interpreting the tests on his heart this week.

Shannon Keith's sister, Kathy, graduated from college last May. She is still looking for a job and Shannon has asked us to pray. Kathy is involved in a local church in Ohio and wants to stay in the area.

Mike Thomas' leg is continuing to heal. Pray for God's protection as he enters the game for the rest of the season. Also, pray for Mike that he would continue to grow in his relationship with the Father.

Pray for finances to finish Pedro Basilio's house. We need to have a total of \$5,000.00 by the middle of October.

**Baby talk**

Claude and Nancy Hammond are the latest additions to the church's list of "expecting parents." Their first child is due in late April. Be praying for Nancy and the other women in our church who are with child: Judy Greer and Elizabeth Williams.

**Historic prayer**

September 6, 1990 was an historic day for our church. For the first time in who knows how long (maybe the first time ever), the men outnumbered the women at the Thursday morning prayer meeting! For those of you who doubted that miracles can happen - doubt no more! Surprisingly, none of the women at the prayer meeting seemed upset at being outnumbered. "We've been praying for some godly men to attend for a long time!" one of them said.

Remember, prayer meetings are held by our church each Thursday morning at 6 a.m. and Sundays at 4 p.m. The place where our prayer warriors do battle is at

Woodland Ave. Baptist Church. Sorry, but no coffee and doughnuts are served, but plenty of New Wine and Living Water, along with the Bread of Life, are available.

**Devotion**

"If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine..." - John 7:17

"The golden rule for understanding spiritually is not intellect, but obedience. If a man wants scientific knowledge, intellectual curiosity is his guide; but if he wants insight into what Jesus Christ teaches, he can only get it by obedience... Intellectual darkness comes through ignorance; spiritual darkness comes because of something I do not intend to obey."

-Oswald Chambers

**Coach Billy**

Pray for Billy as he takes yet another role of leadership in his life - that of a youth soccer coach. It is a good chance for him to instill Christian values in the lives of some youngsters and to minister to some of their parents as well. Also, parents can complain to the coaches about almost anything that they don't like

about the team. Pray that Billy has patience and ministers to these people in an effective way.

**Home schoolers tested**

This past summer, a group of home schoolers from the church took achievement tests.

As expected they did as well or better than the national average. The composite test scores show that our home schoolers are near the 90 percentile, with some individual students doing work three to five grades ahead of their present status.

**Child Training**

David Lanier will be sharing on child training at the church, October 27-28. The Saturday evening meeting will be at 7:00.

There will be two meetings on Sunday. The first will begin at 3:00 and we will break for a sack dinner at 4:30. Church will begin around 5:30 on that week.

Child care will not be provided for any meeting other than the one at 5:30.

**Becoming Better  
Husbands and Wives  
Sunday, September 23**

Paul and Alice Prather will be sharing on the role of husband and wife:

2:45-3:45 Session one

Alice will teach the women  
Paul will teach the men

4:15-5:00 Supper

5:00 Paul will teach at regular meeting

(Child care provided. \$5 per adult for supper, kids \$1. Please pre-register with Jimmy by calling before September 18.)

## September/October

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
5:00 pm Worship at Woodland	17	18 Children's church 7:00	19 UCF 8:00	20	21	22
23 <b>MARRIAGE SEMINAR</b> 2:45 Worship at 5:00	24	25 Larry's HF 7:00 Billy's TT 7:00	26 UCF 8:00	27 6:00 am prayer	28	29 CAMPING & MOON LIGHT CANOE TRIP
30 CAMPING 5:00 pm Worship at Woodland	1	2 Children's church 7:00	3 UCF 8:00	4 6:00 am prayer	5	6
7 5:00 pm Worship at Woodland	8	9 Larry's HF 7:00 Billy's TT 7:00	10 UCF 8:00	11 6:00 am prayer	12 Gregg's HF 7:00	13
14 5:00 pm Worship at Woodland	15	16 Children's church 7:00	17 UCF 8:00	18 6:00 am prayer	19	20

### *Pastor's Brief*

*Lexington Christian Fellowship  
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